



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

**USDA Rural Development
FY 2022 Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge
November 16, 2022**

State	Senators	Recipient	Cooperative Agreement	Project Description
Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge				
AL	Richard Shelby, Tommy Tuberville	Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham	\$250,000	This Rural Development investment will be used to coordinate outdoor recreation planning to develop an ecotourism target industry in the city of Dora, the town of Parrish and the town of Nauvoo in Walker County, Alabama. Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham will develop Economic Development Strategic Plans for each target community. This project will serve each target community by identifying their individual strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) through a detailed survey that will evaluate ways and methods to leverage existing assets that may be used to grow the communities outdoor recreational economy. The Walker Area Community Foundation is contributing \$31,500 of in-kind support.
AR	John Boozman, Tom Cotton	Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development	\$249,386	This Rural Development investment will be used to allow the Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development to implement the Arkansas Delta Rhythm and Bayous Placemaking Initiative (ADRBPI) project with local and multijurisdictional efforts to improve quality of life, rural economy, and e-Connectivity in four Delta communities. Through the ADRBPI project, Winrock and project partners will strengthen the capacity of the rural, Delta communities of Gould, Dumas, McGehee, and Dermott, Arkansas. ADRBPI will serve the population by deploying a tiered technical assistance approach to generate innovative placemaking strategies. To help execute these strategies, Tourism Amenity Site Plans will be developed by Crafton Tull, e-Connectivity Assessments will be conducted by Connected Nation, and Innovation Seed Grants will be leveraged by each community. USDA Rural Development staff will play a substantial role throughout this project, including convening city planning meetings, participating in the completion of assessments, and providing technical assistance about programs and services that can help with the implementation of placemaking projects.



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AR, MS	John Boozman (AR), Tom Cotton (AR), Cindy Hyde-Smith (MS), Roger Wicker (MS)	Communities Unlimited Inc. ^	\$250,000	This Rural Development investment will be used to identify three diverse leadership teams, enhance broadband access, equity and/or education in each community, identify vacant and abandoned properties for pocket parks and community garden enhancements, identify potential recreational spaces, and support small business solutions that enhance quality of life. This includes potential transportation options in the communities through technical assistance and capital. Communities Unlimited Inc. based in Arkansas will create capacity and sustainability in rural communities and connect them with a network of funding agencies. The communities of Hollandale, Gore Springs, and Coahoma Mississippi will benefit from this project by receiving technical assistance to develop a place-based plan that will serve as a guide for future development of these communities.
CA, NM	Dianne Feinstein (CA), Alex Padilla (CA), Ben Ray Lujan (NM), Martin Heinrich (NM)	Rural Community Assistance Corporation ^	\$227,045	This Rural Development investment will be used to provide planning support, technical assistance and training to the communities of Clearlake and Fort Jones in California and Mora, New Mexico. Rural Community Assistance Corporation's goal is to improve the social, physical and economic well-being of each community. The expected result of this project is to build the capacity of each community by planning for and implementing placemaking projects and providing training to community leaders and entrepreneurs to manage the identified projects. This project will serve the community by assessing local placemaking capacity and opportunities to support implementation of previously identified Community Economic Development priorities. This project will receive support from all three targeted communities.
GA	Jon Ossoff, Raphael Warnock	University of Georgia Research Foundation Inc. ^	\$249,980	This Rural Development investment will be used to allow the University of Georgia Research Foundation Inc. to utilize the Institute of Government's Planning Rural Opportunities for Prosperity and Economic Leadership (PROPEL) model. The PROPEL model utilizes six elements (data analysis, citizen input, asset-based strategy development, plan implementation and support, connections with university researchers, impact evaluation) to help rural communities develop and implement a placemaking strategy based on their unique needs and goals. In addition, the PROPEL Placemaking Collaborative has three main objectives; build the capacity of rural community leaders for placemaking and community planning, develop a community placemaking strategy and assist communities with implementing their community placemaking plan.



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IA	Joni Ernst, Chuck Grassley	The Trustees of Grinnell College	\$197,153	This Rural Development investment will be used to assess community needs and priorities in order to create a vision for community placemaking-informing the work for the next decade. The Build a Better Grinnell 2030 Placemaking Planning Project will identify community needs and aspirations to shape and inform future work as community partners collaboratively strive towards a thriving Grinnell area for 2030 and beyond. The Trustees Grinnell College will serve the population by leveraging the steering committee relationships for planning and implementation activities to better understand community needs and serve the community in years to come. With its broad sector reach, the project steering committee will connect with organizations and individuals across the Grinnell area and establish opportunities to conduct assessments and identify key contacts within those organizations.
IA, KS, MS	Joni Ernst (IA), Chuck Grassley (IA), Roger Marshall (KS), Jerry Moran (KS), Cindy Hyde-Smith (MS), Roger Wick (MS)	CHM LLC ^	\$250,000	This Rural Development investment will be used to develop a strategic plan and implement technical assistance in two rural communities located in Kansas and Mississippi to strengthen place-based economic development, build cross-sector partnerships, and improve quality of life for current and future residents. The expected result of this investment is to analyze broadband capacity for rural residences and businesses, develop strategies to improve the local housing market, develop new or enhanced cultural and recreational amenities, strengthen workforce development, and establish a peer exchange network. CHM LLC based in Iowa will assist Emporia, Kansas and Tunica County, Mississippi with building robust and sustainable economies through strategic investments in infrastructure, partnerships, and innovation. The Regional Development Association of East Central Kansas has committed \$40,000 to this project and an organization called Visit Emporia has committed \$5,000 for the seed grant.
KY	Mitch McConnell, Rand Paul	Partners for Rural Impact Inc.*	\$160,000	This Rural Development investment will be used to increase community eConnectivity rates in Appalachian Kentucky with a focus on the eight counties that are part of the Rural Partners Network – the Kentucky Highlands Community Network. Partners for Rural Impact Inc. recognizes that broadband access is an essential lever in working to improve educational outcomes in Appalachian Kentucky. Their experience shows that libraries are a gathering place for residents of the communities and a trusted purveyor of resources and support to families. Rural libraries have influence and the access to residents needed to increase eConnectivity rates. This project will provide technical assistance and support to rural libraries and strengthen their capacity to align with the individual community’s plan for broadband.



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MN	Amy Klobuchar, Tina Smith	Headwaters Regional Development Commission	\$206,113	This Rural Development investment will be used to develop a plan that will address quality of life issues in Bemidji, Minnesota’s Ridgeway Neighborhood. The expected result of this project is neighborhood revitalization through community engagement and multi-sectoral and multi-jurisdictional partnerships. Headwaters Regional Development Commission will serve the community by providing opportunities and resources to create a web of support services which will increase individual and community resilience and empower neighborhood residents. The United Way of Bemidji Area is contributing \$11,700 of in-kind support, the Rotary Neighborhood Project is contributing \$5,000 of in-kind support, Beltrami County Public Health will provide \$19,344 of in-kind support and the Minnesota Department of Transportation will provide \$2,843 of in-kind support.
MS	Cindy Hyde-Smith, Roger Wicker	Mississippi Main Street Association Inc.*	\$250,000	This Rural Development investment will be used to help Mississippi Main Street Association Inc. assemble a team of planning, design, and economic development professionals to create and implement innovative placemaking plans for 11 rural communities across the state of Mississippi. Each community will participate in a two-day community engagement process, during which the planning team will collaborate with community leaders, stakeholders, and city officials to develop a unique, community-specific, and strategic placemaking plan that will provide the rural communities with strategies designed to enhance existing assets to improve the quality of life and living for residents and visitors. Project plans will focus on the following placemaking themes: enhancing capacity for broadband access, preserving cultural and historic structures, increasing economic activity, and supporting the development of vibrant, recreational public spaces.



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NE	Deb Fischer, Ben Sasse	Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska	\$247,938	This Rural Development investment will be used to provide the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska with the necessary technical and financial assistance to create an actionable placemaking plan for the Knox County, Nebraska area. The proposed project will create an actionable placemaking plan through asset and infrastructure mapping, strategic planning, and capacity building. This community and economic development effort will focus on tourism, recreation, and planning technical assistance for the Knox County area communities, assisting in COVID-19 economic recovery, and capitalizing upon recent regional investments in recreation and broadband infrastructure. The population will be served by this project through the development of a place-based plan that will define the tourism strategy for the region and county, analyze tourism assets and supporting infrastructure, create detailed narrative about opportunities in the region, communities will be trained for placemaking implementation, and communities will have identified USDA grants to target identified projects. Matching funds are being provided by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the amount of \$42,191 and Knox County Economic Development will provide \$5,000 for seed grant support.
NY	Kirstin Gillibrand, Charles Schumer	Mohawk Valley Economic Development District Inc.	\$173,033	This Rural Development investment will be used to develop a strategic plan to identify implementable placemaking projects in four target communities in the Mohawk Valley Region of upstate New York. Mohawk Valley Economic Development District Inc. will help solve problems, create effective new projects and strategic plans, and build more creative and equitable places to live, work, and play in the town of Minden, village of Fort Plain, village of Palatine Bridge and the village of Nelliston. This project will serve the community by creating a placemaking plan to identify and prioritize regionally significant projects. The project is receiving \$35,544 of in-kind support from partners and target communities.



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OR, WA	Jeff Merkley (OR), Ron Wyden (OR), Maria Cantwell (WA), Patty Murray (WA)	Rural Development Initiatives Inc.	\$250,000	This Rural Development investment will be used to plan and implement a Placemaking Learning Tour and Mentor Match entrepreneurship training for Latinx and youth populations in Othello, Washington. Rural Development Initiatives Inc. will develop an understanding of successfully implemented placemaking projects, innovative broadband activities and ag-tech models of thriving food and agriculture-based economies in Northwest Washington. This project will serve the community by developing a plan and curriculum on becoming a food business mecca to support local small businesses and to foster a food related community gathering space. The Avista Corporation will contribute \$12,500, the Innovia Foundation will contribute \$12,500 and the Columbia Bank will contribute \$750 to the project. The City of Othello will contribute \$10,020 of in-kind support and the Adams County Development Council will contribute \$10,000 of in-kind support.
PA	Robert Casey, Patrick Toomey	Hailstone Economic LLC	\$250,000	This Rural Development investment will be used to create a written placemaking plan that will be used as the outline/roadmap for Columbia County. Hailstone Economic LLC will implement and fund projects identified in the plan. This project will invite coordination between municipalities and identify assets that the county can use to promote arts and culture while also creating pedestrian and bike friendly intersections within communities. Community Solutions Group and Commonwealth University contributed \$18,700 and \$23,650 in in-kind services, respectively.
TN	Marsha Blackburn, Bill Hagerty	Chattanooga Area Regional Council of Governments	\$250,000	This Rural Development Investment will be used to develop a place-based plan that will implement coordination of a regional placemaking and tourism development program by developing and marketing public arts, heritage tourism and outdoor recreation development in four counties. The region served includes Sequatchie Valley Region of Southeast Tennessee (Grundy County, Bledsoe County, Sequatchie County, and Marion County, TN). Chattanooga Area Regional Council of Governments will implement the coordination of a regional placemaking and tourism development program, within the Sequatchie Valley, by developing and marketing public arts, heritage tourism, and outdoor recreation development in their region. The Southeast Tennessee Development District is contributing \$45,000 to this project.



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TX	John Cornyn, Ted Cruz	Building Community Workshop	\$249,980	This Rural Development investment will be used to develop a plan that will address housing issues in Denison, Port Lavaca, and Hidalgo Counties in Texas. The expected result of this project is to build capacity among three rural Texas counties that are facing challenges in bringing affordable housing to their communities. This project will help Building Community Workshop develop a housing guide for each county and provide support in understanding the needs, challenges, and opportunities as they relate to broadband access in each county. The Come Dream Come Build organization is contributing \$35,000 and City of Port Lavaca, Texas is contributing \$5,000 of in-kind support.
VA, AL	Tim Kaine (VA), Mark Warner (VA), Richard Shelby (AL), Tommy Tuberville (AL)	The Conservation Fund a Nonprofit Corp	\$202,396	This Rural Development investment will be used to convene a coalition of diverse partners and stakeholders to craft a Placemaking Plan that: 1) identifies and prioritizes the protection of multiple at-risk Civil Rights and Black History sites in the Black Belt region of central Alabama; 2) outlines the community's goals and actionable strategies for maximizing these community-based assets to support greater social and cultural vitality for these rural communities; and 3) builds the coalition of partners and momentum needed to advance the plans goals and objectives. The Conservation Fund, a nonprofit corporation will serve the population by providing planning, technical assistance, and capacity building support for stakeholders working across Dallas, Lowndes, and Perry counties to advance placemaking goals that center the African American experience and drive sustainable economic development opportunities for all.
VT, AR, AL	Patrick Leahy (VT), Bernard Sanders (VT), John Boozman (AR), Tom Cotton (AR), Richard Shelby (AL), Tommy Tuberville (AL)	Rural Innovation Strategies Inc.	\$247,864	This Rural Development investment will be used to provide the capacity and resources for Rural Innovation Strategies Inc. to partner with local leaders in Selma, Alabama, Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Rutland, Vermont to develop Placemaking Plans centered on tech innovation hubs. The expected result of this project is to lay the groundwork for equitable, sustainable, and thriving live-work-play ecosystems that can support scalable tech entrepreneurship with the necessary foundational elements, by centering tech innovation hubs in the Placemaking Plans. The project will serve the population by implementing a community-centered and equitable process that will help communities recover from the economic shocks of the pandemic through three key objectives: strategic placemaking planning promotion of access and equity and development of cross-sectoral partnerships.



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WI	Tammy Baldwin, Ron Johnson	Ho-Chunk Nation	\$249,112	This Rural Development investment will be used to develop a plan to enhance the capacity of broadband connectivity in Jackson County, Wisconsin. Ho-Chunk Nation will improve virtual education, remote job accessibility and telemedicine. This project will serve the community by designing placemaking activities that will address the need for delivery of broadband services. The Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Business is contributing \$37,500 to the project.
* Project is serving a Rural Partners Network's community and has received other authorized agency funding.				
^ Project is serving a Rural Partners Network's community and has received funding through RPIC.				